

Budget Unit: Department of Human Services - Field Operations

Budget Unit: 402M100001

History and Purpose

The Field Operations appropriation to the [Department of Human Services](#) (DHS) provides funding for staff that directly and indirectly supports the delivery of protective services, case management services, eligibility determinations, basic support services, and support for providers. In FY 2014, staffing levels were set at 1,621 employees located in 42 full-time county offices and centralized locations in Council Bluffs and Des Moines. The Department divides the Field Operation unit into five service areas: Northern, Western, Eastern, Des Moines, and Cedar Rapids. Some of the frequent activities performed by staff in these areas include:

- **Protective Services:** Specialized Social Workers perform child and dependent adult assessments when abuse is alleged. In FY 2014, approximately one-third of the child protective assessments have been handled as Family Assessments. Generally, each worker has 12-14 new assessments each month. Child and dependent adult abuse assessments must be completed within 20 business days and Family Assessments are completed within 10 business days.
- **Child Welfare Case Management:** Social Work case managers support child welfare cases as well as adoptive placements, foster care licensure, and other related services. A case manager that handles only child welfare cases supports 29 children and/or families. For the other services, they support 114 children and/or families. Tasks include identifying child and parent needs, developing case plans, and connecting families with providers.
- **Eligibility Services:** Income Maintenance staff perform eligibility activities for [Medicaid](#), Food Assistance, and [Family Investment Program](#) recipients. Tasks include reviewing eligibility information for completeness, cross checking citizenship, income, and other information in multiple databases, and other duties as necessary.

The DHS utilizes a sixth Centralized Service area and customer support units are also part of Field Operations. Activities include:

- **Centralized Services:** The Intake unit receives over 200 reports of child or dependent adult every day. The Customer Call Center receives over 28,000 calls monthly from clients that need to report eligibility changes. The Facility Unit supports Medicaid coverage for nursing facilities. The [Child Care Assistance](#) Unit determines eligibility for assistance as well as provider payment support. The Integrated Claims Recovery Unit researches and recovers payments due to error or fraud. Other groups determine eligibility for federal funding and support child care facility licensing.
- **Customer Service and Help Desks:** These small groups are subject matter experts in social work and eligibility matters and provide statewide support for front-line staff. Other groups support training, constituent contacts, legislation analysis and budgeting.

In FY 2014, field staff included: Social Workers 22.0%, Abuse Assessors 13.0%, Income Maintenance Workers 36.0%, Supervisors 8.0%, Management 4.0%, and Support 17.0%.

Funding – State General Fund

An annual appropriation for Field Operations is provided in the Health and Human Services Appropriations Act.

Funding – Federal Funds

Federal funds support this appropriation through a number of sources. Programs include Title IV-B, Title IV-E, Title XIX, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Child Care Development Fund, and the Social Services Block Grant. In FY 2015, federal funding provided \$87.3 million of all field operations revenue. Federal funding also supports the Bureau of Refugee Services located within the Field Services appropriation. The primary function of this unit is to help non-English-speaking refugees find employment.

Related Statutes and Administrative Rules

Iowa Code sections [217.42](#), [217.43](#), [217.44](#), [234.12](#), [235A.14](#), [235B](#), [239B](#), and [249A.3](#)

Iowa Administrative Code: [441 IAC 1.4](#)(17A) and [441 IAC 65.2](#)(234)

More Information

Department of Human Services Field Offices: http://dhs.iowa.gov/dhs_office_locator

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